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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Thursday, June 27, 1935

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "TOURIST BUSINESS FOR RURAL HOUSEWIVES." Information from the Extension Office, United States Department of Agriculture.

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The man who invented the automobile didn't realize all that he was starting. Certainly he never dreamed that his invention would provide two good opportunities for women on farms today. But the automobile has been responsible for the many roadside markets which women are now running in every state in the Union. And it is also responsible for the tourist homes and camps now located on all the nation's highways.

The tourist business grew up as a natural response to demand. Vacation time has gradually become automobile-travel time to thousands of American families. In fact, approximately twelve million tourist parties take vacation trips by automobile every year in these United States. And, of course, the two important questions each day for each one of these travelers are: "Where to eat?" and "Where to spend the night?" You can see how this was a definite opportunity knocking at the farm housewife's door -- and she took it. Particularly in the East where big roomy farm homes with plenty of extra bedrooms stand along the highways, entertaining tourists has become serious business.

Of course, few farm women were well-prepared for these customers at their doors. They needed to know how to accommodate their guests comfortably; what food to serve them and how to serve it; how much to charge for rooms and meals; and so on. And, naturally, they turned for advice to the home demonstration agent in their county, or to their State college. As a result of these appeals to the Extension Service, many states now have conferences of tourist-home owners each year where problems are talked over, where successful women in the business give the benefit of their experience; and where specialists discuss tourist home meals, or ways to make home grounds attractive or comfortable bedrooms or other topics of interest both to women who are considering going into the business and those who are interested in increasing their patronage. You may be interested in hearing that at all of these conferences the women agreed that the three chief wants of any tourist are: a good bed, good food, and plenty of hot water.

Some of the most up-and-coming tourist-home managers these days are in the New England States. Vermont now has a state-wide association to improve and protect its business. The Vermont Tourist Home Owners' Association, organized in 1932, cooperates with the State Extension Service, Board of Health and

Publicity Department. Farm housewives who join this organization can have the help of all these state organizations in running their business. In May of this year these Vermonters gathered at Proctorsville for an all-day meeting. I think you'll be interested in their program that day. They heard the lieutenant-governor talk on recreation in the future in Vermont. They heard Miss Florence Hall of the Extension Office in Washington discuss buying household supplies for trouist homes, and a man from the Federal Housing Administration explain how to get loans for repairs and remodeling, and an architect discuss preserving the charm of their farm homes. They also listened to a talk on economy in food buying and saw a demonstration of fresh vegetable preparation.

In New Hampshire tourist home managers also have a yearly meeting under the supervision of their State University. All tourist homes in the state that meet the requirements of the board of health can now have special signs saying: "Accredited by the New Hampshire Board of Health." According to a recent survey, New Hampshire now has 2917 establishments for tourists, and of these, 1594 have received accredited certificates. The state inspector who passes on these homes considers location, general appearance outside and in, supervision, equipment, method of handling food, water supply, toilet facilities, sewage and waste disposal. He has refused certificates to a number of homes because the operators were poor housekeepers.

For several years West Virginia also has had a tourist-home association started by the farm women's clubs with the help of the Extension Service. The organization started with the idea of keeping homes up to a high standard by regular inspection. More than 28 country homes in this state now display their distinctive blue sign with gold letters saying "Mountain State Tourist Home." Last year more than 6000 customers spent the night at these West Virginia homes.

Women in other states are now asking for help in their business. For example, women in Maine last summer asked a county agent and a state specialist to visit their homes and make suggestions. The two visitors made a survey of 35 tourist homes, stopping for the night and a meal, and taking notes as they went. The reported their findings at county meetings and discussed ways the women could improve their business. A feature of this meeting was a film strip showing pictures of successful tourist homes, in and out, and giving illustrated reasons for their success. By the way, this film strip is available to <u>your</u> club, too, or to any group of women interested in entertaining tourists. It should be helpful whether you run a tourist <u>home</u> or a <u>camp</u>. If you want it, write to the Extension Office of the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and ask for the film strip on keeping tourists. Groups in Delaware, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania have already used it.

By the way, Pennsylvania tourist-home owners had an interesting get-together last summer on the breakfast problem. Their agent put on a demonstration of two good breakfasts for overnight guests -- a light meal of fruit, toast and coffee, and a heartier one of fruit, toast, bacon, eggs, and coffee.

She showed them how to set the table, how to serve, how to compute costs. She proved that an attractive table setting needn't be expensive. The cloth and napkins she used were made from bleached feed bags. The question of how much to charge for meals, the extension workers answer this way: They say:

"First, estimate the cost of the menu. Everything either used or produced is worth money. Allow yourself a fair profit. A fair charge per meal is two times the cost of the raw material used. If raw food for an evening meal costs you thirty cents per person, a fair charge would be 60 to 75 cents to cover labor, fuel, taxes, rent, and the like."

Several Maryland tourist-home managers have taken a bit of advice from the film strip: "If you have a specialty, develop it. You may become famous for your waffles or fricasseed chicken." Several are successfully featuring chicken scrapple, made according to the state specialist's recipe. Others have had good luck with their tomato juice. Many have made enough money in one season to build additions to their homes, or to paint and paper. One woman reports that she papered her entire first floor and installed a large electric refrigerator, all from last season's tourist business.

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